

Committee on the Budget • Majority Caucus U.S. House of Representatives Iim Nussle, Chairman

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Summarizing budgetary issues in legislation scheduled for the House floor

18 March 2003

Week of 17	March	2003
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SUSPENSION CALENDAR

1) Condemning the Punishment of Execution by Stoning as a Gross Violation of Human Rights (H.Con.Res. 26).



This resolution has no budgetary implications.

- 2) Nicaragua Property Dispute Settlement Act of 2003 (H.R. 868). This bill requires all claims by U.S. citizens against the government of Nicaragua for the expropriation of property between January 1, 1956 and January 9, 2002, be presented in writing to the headquarters of the Department of State or the U.S. embassy in Nicaragua on or before 120 days of a date to be determined by the Secretary of State. The bill will have no significant budgetary effect.
- 3) Urging Passage of a Resolution Addressing Human Rights in North Korea at the 59th Session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, and Calling on the Government of North Korea to Respect and Protect the Human Rights of its Citizens (H.Res. 109). This resolution has no budgetary implications.
- 4) Designation of the Ted Weiss Federal Building (H.R. 145). This resolution has no budgetary implications.
- 5) Resolution Stating that the Pledge of Allegiance Should Be Upheld (H.Res. 132). This resolution has no budgetary implications.
- 6) Mortgage Servicing Clarification Act (H.R. 314). This bill exempts certain persons from debt collection disclosure requirements. The exemption would apply to debt collectors who service federally related mortgage loans as their principal line. The bill is not expected to increase direct spending - spending not subject to appropriations – or reduce revenue.
- 7) Cibola Wildlife Refuge Boundary Correction (H.R. 417). This bill directs the Secretary of the Interior to resurvey and publish the new boundaries of the Cibola National Wildlife Refuge in Imperial County, CA. The bill does not increase direct spending or reduce revenue.

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PLEASE NOTE: This document addresses budgetary issues only. It should not be taken to address support or opposition on any other grounds. A green flag indicates no serious budgetary or budget compliance concerns. A vellow flag indicates moderate or potential problems. A red flag indicates serious problems. Also note: Floor schedules and legislative details are subject to change after publication.

This document was prepared by the majority staff of the Committee on the Budget, U.S. House of Representatives. It has not been approved by the full committee and therefore may not reflect the views of all the committee's members.

8) To Direct the Secretary of the Interior to Conduct a Comprehensive Study of the Rathdrum Prairie/Spokane Valley Aquifer, Located in Idaho and Washington (H.R. 699).



This bill directs the Secretary of the Interior to study the Rathdrum Prairie/Spokane Valley Aguifer for the purpose of preparing a model of the aquifer, and establishing for Idaho and Washington an understanding of the aquifer as a groundwater resource. The bill authorizes \$3.5 million to be appropriated for this study. The bill does not increase direct spending or reduce revenue.

9) To Authorize the Secretary of the Interior to Conduct a Study of the San Gabriel River Watershed (H.R. 519).



This bill requires the Secretary of the Interior to conduct and report to certain congressional committees on a special resource study of the San Gabriel River and its tributaries north of and including the City of Santa Fe Springs, and the San Gabriel Mountains within the territory of the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy. The study will consider regional flood control and drainage needs and publicly owned infrastructure such as wastewater treatment facilities. The bill does not increase direct spending or decrease revenue.

10) Armed Forces Tax Fairness Act of 2003 (H.R. 878).



The legislation has been modified from its previous reported

version, and no final legislative text was available at the time of the preparation of this Budget Week. Provisions in the reported bill that are expected to remain include the exclusion of the gain on the sale of a principal residence by a member of the uniformed services or the foreign service. The bill will reduce revenue, but it will not cause the level to be lower than that provided for in the most recently agreed to budget resolution (H.Con.Res. 353). The revenue reduction will first become effective in fiscal year 2003.

11) Tax Relief, Simplification, and Equity Act of 2003.

It is believed this bill contains elements from the original version of the Armed Forces Tax Fairness Act, as reported by the Ways and Means Committee. No other information is available on the measure.

LEGISLATION CONSIDERED UNDER A RULE

Bill: Bankruptcy Abuse Prevention and Consumer Protection Act



of 2003 (H.R. 975).

Committee: Judiciary

This bill is similar to H.R 333 from the 107th Congress. The bill addresses many areas of Summary:

> bankruptcy practice. It establishes means-testing for determining debtor relief under chapter 7; permits a waiver of bankruptcy fees for indigent individual debtors; requires mandatory credit counseling within 180 days of filing; promotes alternative dispute resolution; and preserves defenses against predatory lenders. The bill also provides for additional consumer provisions; modifies the treatment of certain nondischargeable consumer debts; makes amendments to the Truth in Lending Act; and makes certain changes in the area of business bankruptcy. The bill reclassifies, as offsetting collections and offsetting receipts, certain fees currently recorded as revenue. The legislation omits any language relating to the discharge of liabilities related to abortion protests. The bill

also creates a number of new judgeships.

Cost: At the time of publication, a cost estimate was not available. Based on its preliminary

review, the Budget Committee expects enactment of the bill to reduce discretionary

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Budget Week Page 2 spending (spending subject to appropriation) by \$22 million in 2004 and by \$10 million for the 2004-2008 period. The reclassification of fees - as offsetting collections and receipts rather than revenue – is expected to reduce revenue by \$54 million each year for the 2004-2008 period. It also expected that the bill will cause spending to increase by as much as \$23 million during the same period.

Budget Act:

This bill would violate sections 302 and 303 of the Budget Act. These violations would occur because: 1) the bill increases spending over the allocation of budget authority to the Judiciary Committee; and 2) it first reduces revenue in a year – fiscal year 2004 – for which a budget resolution has not been adopted. The bill increases direct spending by \$23 million, and reduces revenue by \$270 million, for fiscal years 2004-2008. These are consistent with H.R. 333 except for the addition of three judgeships, which increases direct spending by \$1 million.

Bill: Child Abduction Prevention Act.



Committee: Judiciary

Summary: The bill would establish new Federal crimes relating to sexual abuse; increase fines and

prison sentences for such crimes; and make it easier to investigate sex offenders. The bill direct the Attorney General to assign a national AMBER Alert Coordinator. It provides grants to States for the development and enhancement of highway notification or communication systems. Additionally, the bill increases authorized appropriations for the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and authorizes the use of Community Oriented Policing Services [COPS] grants to assist States in enforcing a convicted sex

offender registration law.

Cost: At the time of publication, a cost estimate was not available. It is expected that enacting

this legislation will have implications similar to those of H.R. 5422, the Child Abduction Prevention Act, which was passed in the 107th Congress. That bill cost \$45 million in the first year and \$64 million over 5 years assuming appropriation of the necessary amounts.

Revenue may be increased due to the higher fines.

Budget Act: For purposes of enforcement, the Budget Committee does not take into account criminal

fines because they are too speculative in nature. Enactment of this bill is not expected to

cause a violation of the Congressional Budget Act.

Bill: The Concurrent Resolution on the Budget

for Fiscal Year 2003 (H.Con.Res. 95)



Committee: **Budget**

Summary: The budget resolution establishes spending and revenue levels, which are executed

through allocations to the appropriations and authorizing committees. As required under

Section 302(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (the Budget Act), the

discretionary spending levels established in the budget resolution are allocated to the Appropriations Committee, and the mandatory spending levels are allocated to each of the authorizing committees with mandatory spending authority. These levels are enforced

through points of order on the House floor.

This budget resolution also provides reconciliation instructions to a total of 14 committees for two reconciliation bills. The first bill is intended to boost economic growth and job creation. It includes directives to both the Ways and Means Committee, to reduce revenue

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Budget Week Page 3 through tax cuts, and to the Education and Workforce Committee, to raise spending on certain employment related programs.

The second bill is designed to produce budgetary savings. Directives for this bill are addressed to 14 committees, including the two named above.

Budget Act:

This budget resolution complies with all of the elements required by the Budget Act. The Budget Act requires Congress to complete action on the budget resolution conference report by 15 April.

Prepared by

The Committee on the Budget

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